



by [Deva Hardeep Singh](#) | [Dharma Seeds Yoga Press](#) | 02 June 2023

Meditation is like yoga's hype man

He forcibly, in a loving manner, pushed me down into a chair and told me to shut up for five minutes. We had been talking of meditation and true to myself, as I'd been vaccinated at birth with a phonographic needle, I dominated the conversation.

While I sat in the chair I noticed my mind felt like I would at the end of a very strenuous hard working day. It was spinning without my help. I squirmed, twitched, popped my neck and shoulders, and it was barely 45 seconds. I had 4 and a half more minutes to go. I didn't know if I could. My mind was replaying present, past, and future conversations while I remained silent. It was the worst 5 minutes of what I thought could be the worst ever. Life has taught me at least for me, my definition of worst changes expositionally and with fluidity.



That was the late summer of 92' and thankfully since I'm able to sit in stillness for more than an hour. The practice of meditation helped me through my recovery and has been a steady friend for 31 years. One day at a time, one week at a time, one month at a time, you get the idea.

Yes, you will miss some days, and you no doubt will have natural life situations that arise that take your necessary focus. Remember it's a practice, not a perfection. There's no destination in mind, yet meditation opens up your spiritual centers like a duck to water. Many teachers present a glorified dreamful image while I try to be

transparent. Even after 31 years, I struggle with my daily practice as any other normal person does. I can only speak of things I experience.

The foundation

Meditation is a mind and body practice that has been shown to have a wide range of benefits, including reducing stress, anxiety, and depression, improving sleep, and boosting self-esteem. Meditation can also help people quit smoking, reduce blood pressure, and manage symptoms of premenstrual syndrome and menopause.

There are many different types of meditation, but all involve focusing your attention on a single point, such as your breath or a mantra. As you focus, you learn to let go of distracting thoughts and emotions. This can help you to relax and find a sense of peace and calm.

Some experts speculate that long before written history, early man discovered the effects of meditation by gazing into the flickering flames of a fire. The earliest record of meditation techniques is found in Hindu scriptures written 5,000 years ago. With the advent of Buddha, around 500 B.C., meditation began to spread across the entire Asian continent. Each culture adapted meditation into their own religious and spiritual practices, resulting in wide variations in styles and traditions.



The Sufis of Islam believe that the practice began in that religion at the very inception, with Mohammed. Thousands of years after meditation was widespread in Asia, it became known in the Western world. Meditative practices, in one form or another, appear in almost all of the world's religions, including Christianity, Judaism, Jainism, and aboriginal religions.

Buddha, one of history's major proponents of meditation, and a major meditation icon, first made his mark around 500 B.C. His teachings were spread far and wide across the Asian continent. Didn't really hit the West till late 1800s and early 1900s. Specifically first English translation of "***The Awakening of Faith: The Classic Exposition of Mahayana Buddhism***," by Asvaghosa. This very early work of Buddhist treatise was translated by Teitaro Suzuki, who did so for Open Court Press. This book really opened my eyes to meditation, especially Ashvaghosa version. As this was the earliest surviving text of Buddhist texts. So his approach is easy and simple. You can read Teitaro's translation here: **<https://www.sacred-texts.com/bud/taf/index.htm>**

The *Awakening of Faith* was first translated into a European language in 1900 by Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki (1870–1966). It was published in Chicago by Open Court Press, with a publisher's preface by Paul Carus, the managing editor of the press (and the son-in-law of its founder, the German-American zinc magnate Edward C. Hegeler).

<https://bit.ly/Buddha-Nature-AoF>

Separate countries or cultures adopted different forms of the word “meditation,” as they each found their own unique way of practicing. Buddhist- and Hindu-based Eastern-style meditation practices are still the most popular today.



As well, as the early Desert Fathers, ascetic monastics that started around 130 A.D. in the deserts outside Jerusalem. The Desert Fathers were hermits, ascetics, and Monks who lived mainly in the Scetes desert of Egypt, beginning around the third century. Very few of the Desert Fathers lived in other deserted regions of Egypt. The original desert hermits were Christians fleeing the chaos and persecution of the Roman Empire's Crisis of the Third Century.

Christians were often scapegoats during these times of unrest, and near the end of the century, the Diocletianic Persecution was more severe and systematic. In

Egypt, refugee communities formed at the edges of population centers, far enough away to be safe from Imperial scrutiny.

In the 1960s and '70s, meditation became extremely popular in America. The interest in popular culture icons such as the Beatles spread through the rest of society, especially the young, while scientists began exploring the practices' physical and mental benefits. Meditation became the first widely accepted form of alternative (or holistic) medicine in the West and is now used routinely to reduce stress and promote healing. (refer to a [previous article](#) on the 70's East meets West)

It is worth noting for historical purposes. Meditation was brought over to the United States, sometimes referred to as coming over to the west, in the late 1800s and very early 1900s. The Theosophical Society printed books by their members going to India and hearing translations of the Indian culture. However meaningful this may have been at that time period, their summations, translations were not peer reviewed, nor annotated in the normal academic manner. As well some of the Theosophical Society hierarchy and authors were found to be frauds.

The other person was [Paramahansa Yogananda](#) who moved to America in the 1920s. One day in 1920, while meditating at the Ranchi school, [Yogananda](#) had a divine vision showing him that now was the time to begin his work in the West. He immediately departed for Calcutta, where the next day he was invited to serve as India's delegate to an international congress of religious leaders convening later that year in Boston. Sri Yukteswar confirmed that the time was right, saying: "All doors are open for you. It is now or never."



Paramahansa Yogananda in a yoga pose & meditation pose.

Although there's a paucity of recorded history on meditation, its roots travel back to ancient times. Researchers speculate that primitive hunter-gatherer societies may have discovered meditation and its altered states of consciousness while staring at the flames of their fires. Over thousands of years, meditation evolved into a structured practice. Indian scriptures called “tantras” mentioned meditation techniques 5000 years ago.

If you are interested in trying meditation, there are many resources available to help you get started. There are books, websites, and apps that can teach you the basics of meditation. You can also find meditation classes and workshops in your community.

Meditation is a safe and effective way to improve your overall health and well-being. If you are looking for a way to reduce stress, anxiety, and depression, or to improve your sleep or self-esteem, meditation may be a good option for you.

Meditation can reduce stress by counteracting the sympathetic nervous system and redirecting blood flow to the parasympathetic nervous system.

Here are some additional benefits of meditation:

- **Increased focus and concentration:** Meditation can help you to focus your attention and improve your concentration. This can be helpful in both your personal and professional life.
- **Improved memory:** Meditation can help to improve your memory and recall. This can be helpful for students, professionals, and anyone who wants to keep their mind sharp.
- **Reduced pain:** Meditation can help to reduce pain, both physical and emotional. This can be helpful for people with chronic pain or who are dealing with emotional distress.
- **Increased creativity:** Meditation can help to increase your creativity and problem-solving skills. This can be helpful in both your personal and professional life.

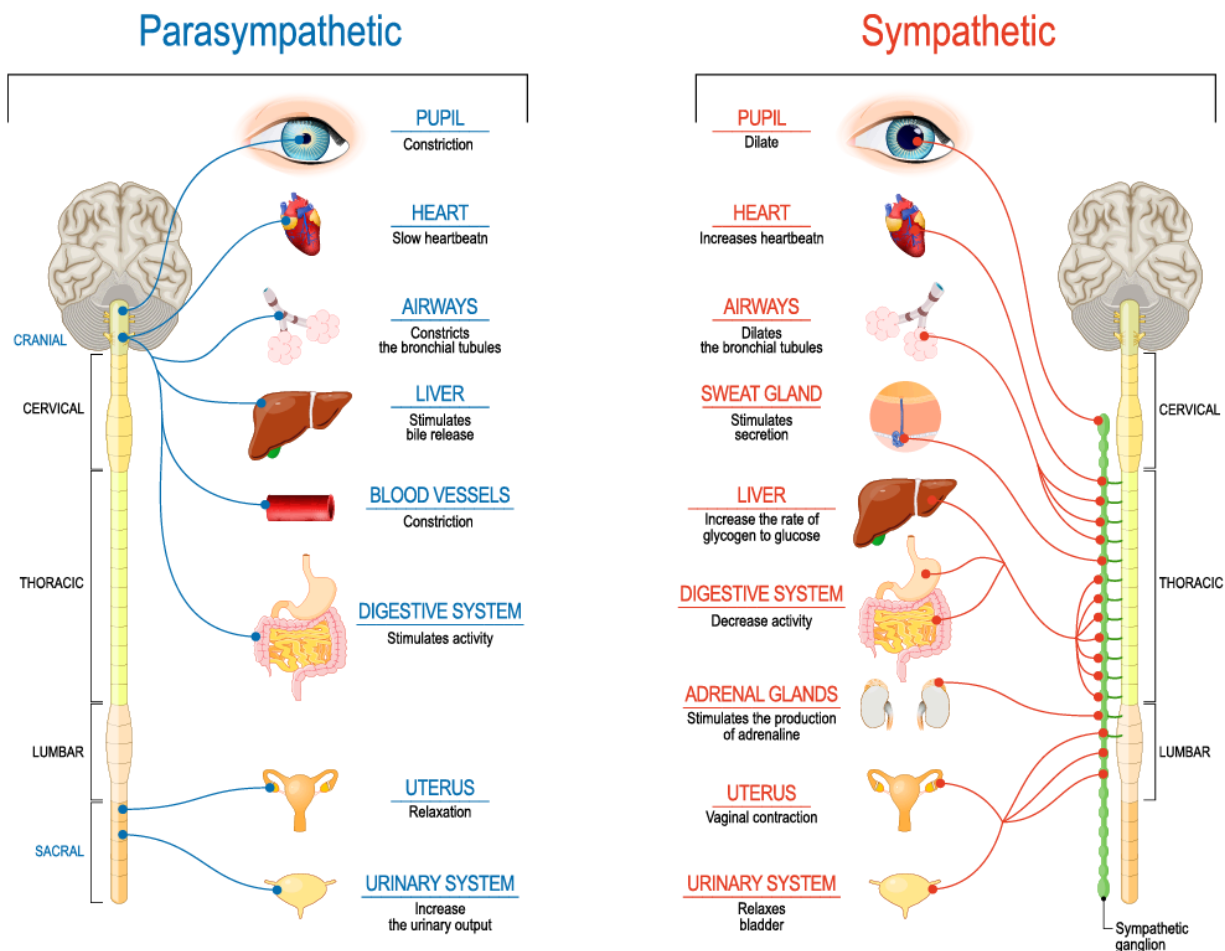
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Meditation is like yoga's hype man. It helps you focus, relax, and connect with your breath, all of which can make your yoga practice more enjoyable and beneficial.

Here are some specific ways that meditation can assist your yoga practice:

- **Increased focus:** Meditation can help you to focus your attention on the present moment, which can be helpful when you are trying to maintain a challenging yoga pose.
- **Reduced stress:** Meditation can help to reduce stress and anxiety, which can make it easier to relax into your yoga poses.
- **Improved breathing:** Meditation can help you to improve your breathing, which is essential for a healthy yoga practice.
- **Increased awareness:** Meditation can help you to become more aware of your body and your mind, which can help you to make better choices in your yoga practice.

The sympathetic nervous system (SNS) and the parasympathetic nervous system (PNS) are two parts of the autonomic nervous system (ANS). The ANS is responsible for controlling involuntary actions, such as heart rate, breathing, and digestion. The SNS and PNS work together to maintain homeostasis, or a state of balance, in the body.



The SNS is responsible for the “fight-or-flight” response. When the SNS is activated, it causes the body to release hormones, such as adrenaline and cortisol, that prepare it to either fight or flee from danger. The SNS increases heart rate, blood pressure, and breathing rate. It also decreases digestion and urination.

The PNS is responsible for the “rest-and-digest” response. When the PNS is activated, it causes the body to release hormones, such as acetylcholine, that promote relaxation and healing. The PNS decreases heart rate, blood pressure, and breathing rate. It also increases digestion and urination.

The SNS and PNS work together to maintain homeostasis in the body. When the body is in a state of danger, the SNS is activated to prepare the body to fight or flee. When the body is safe, the PNS is activated to promote relaxation and healing.

Here is a table that summarizes the functions of the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems:

Nervous System	Function
Sympathetic Nervous System	Prepares the body to fight or flee
Parasympathetic Nervous System	Promotes relaxation and healing

Here are some examples of how the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems work together:

- When you are driving and see a car coming towards you, your sympathetic nervous system is activated. This causes your heart rate to increase, your blood pressure to rise, and your breathing to become faster. These changes prepare your body to either fight or flee from the danger.
- After the car has passed, your parasympathetic nervous system is activated. This causes your heart rate to slow down, your blood pressure to fall, and your breathing to become slower. These changes help your body to relax and return to homeostasis.

The sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems are essential for maintaining homeostasis in the body. They work together to ensure that the body can respond to danger and recover from stress.

Pre-Caution

While engaging in any **yoga activities**, always remember:

- **Listen to your body.** Don't push yourself too hard, and be sure to **modify poses as needed**.
- **Use props to help you.** Props can be a great way to **make poses more accessible** and to reduce the risk of injury.
- **Take breaks.** If you're feeling tired or sore, take a break from your practice.
- **Don't be afraid to ask for help.** If you're not sure how to modify a pose or if you have any concerns, ask your instructor for help.

Always listen to your body and modify poses as needed. Also review on our [website](#), our guidance on using Yoga for mental health purposes.

There are many yoga poses that can assist with meditation. Some of the most common poses include:

- **Easy Pose (Sukhasana):** This is a simple pose that is easy to do and can be done anywhere. To do the easy pose, sit on the floor with your legs crossed and your back straight. You can place a cushion under your hips if needed.



- **Corpse Pose (Savasana):** This is a pose of complete relaxation. To do a corpse pose, lie on your back with your legs extended and your arms at

your sides. Close your eyes and relax your body.



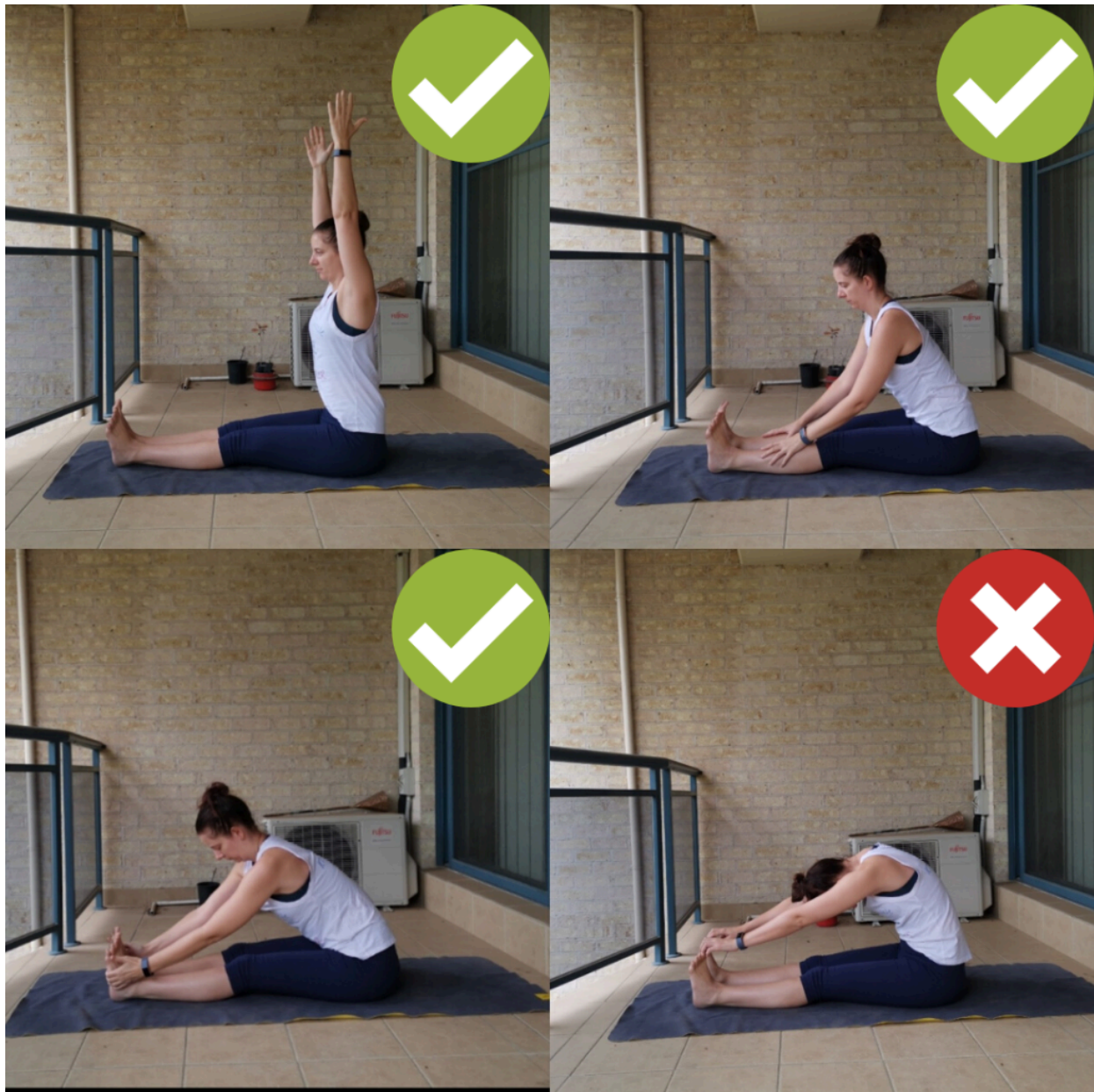
- **Child's Pose (Balasana):** This is a pose of comfort and security. To do a child's pose, kneel on the floor with your knees hip-width apart. Sit back on your heels and fold your torso over your thighs. Rest your forehead on the floor and relax your arms by your sides.

Modifications for child's pose

bodypositiveyoga.com



- **Seated Forward Bend (Paschimottanasana):** This is a pose that stretches the spine and hamstrings. To do a seated forward bend, sit on the floor with your legs extended in front of you. Reach for your toes, keeping your back straight. If you can't reach your toes, bend your knees as needed.



Please note: Due to my ability injuries, I have to use a yoga strap around my feet and use both hands to pull me downwards to a point. I can't go all the way down as some. **Always modify to adjust to your body needs.**

- **Bridge Pose (Setu Bandhasana):** This is a pose that strengthens the back and stretches the spine. To do bridge pose, lie on your back with your knees bent and your feet flat on the floor. Place your arms at your sides, palms down. Press into your feet and lift your hips off the floor until your body forms a straight line from your shoulders to your knees. Hold for a few breaths, then lower back down to the floor.

3 Ways to Modify



<https://myyogazone.com/3-bridge-pose-modifications/>

These are just a few of the many yoga poses that can assist with meditation. If you are new to yoga, it is important to find a pose that is comfortable for you and that you can do safely. You can also find yoga poses that are specifically designed for meditation.

Meditation is a great way to reduce stress, improve focus, and increase relaxation. Adding yoga poses to your meditation practice can help you to achieve these benefits even more effectively.

Resources

BODY SCAN MEDITATION

1

Sit in a comfortable chair in a dimly lit room.

2

Imagine the outline of your body and slowly trace it in your head.

3

Observe the amount of pressure you're feeling against the chair.

4

Where there is more pressure and where there is less. Be mindful.

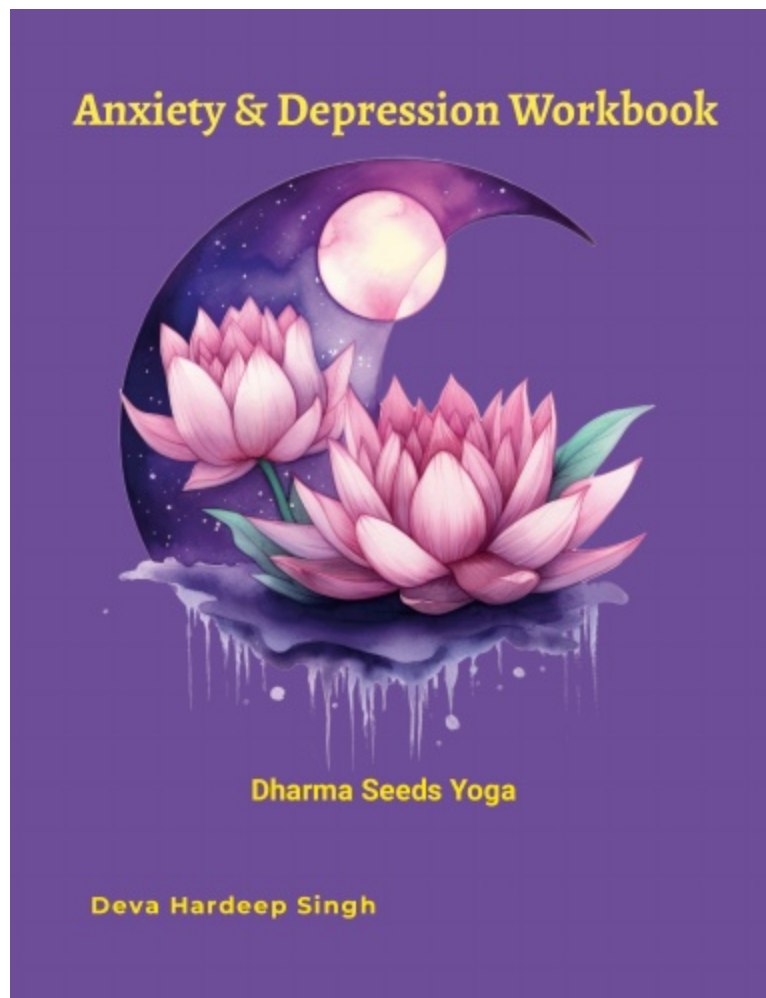
5

Start with your head. Work down to your feet. Then back up the other side of your body.

6

Take about five minutes for this exercise.

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Anxiety & Depression Workbook ~ Dharma Seeds Yoga The Anxiety and Depression Workbook is a self-help book that provides readers with tools and techniques to help them manage their anxiety and depression. The book is based on trauma informed yoga, a type of therapy that focuses on changing the way people think and use yoga for healing. The book focuses and provides readers with exercises and worksheets to help them identify and challenge their negative thoughts and beliefs. The book provides readers with additional resources and information on how to get help for anxiety and depression. The Anxiety and Depression Workbook has been praised by mental health professionals for its clear and concise explanations, and for its practical exercises and worksheets. The book has also been well-received by readers, who have found it helpful in managing their anxiety and depression. If you are struggling with anxiety or depression, the Anxiety and Depression Workbook may be a helpful resource for you. The book can help you learn more about your condition, and provide you with tools and techniques to help you manage your symptoms.



Deva Hardeep Singh (he/him; neurodivergent, gay, ability injured, post-traumatic stress injury, borderline personality injury) is an Oklahoman, a Yuchi Indian, enrolled in the Muscogee Nation, and studied radio/TV/film in college. He's worked as an on-air personality, author, poet, artist, administrative assistant, petroleum landman, barista, staff writer, paralegal, concert promoter, music artist manager, content producer, and graphic designer. He spent 6 months as a National Data Team volunteer for the Bernie Sanders for President campaign. He is a freelance journalist with International papers and magazines with a social justice focus. Recently was able to join the Hulu/FX Series **Reservation Dogs**, as an extra (Seasons 2 & 3) He's been a meditator for over 30 years (Buddhist, Chan, Zen), teaches meditation, and provides yoga instruction, and a Reiki III Master.



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